A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday July 7. 1711.

IN my last I gave you an Account how, and upon what Pretence the *French*, upon the Occasion of the New Possession of *Old Spain* under King *Philip*, got also Possession of great part of *New Spain*, pretending to put it in a Posture of Defence, which indeed they have done but too well.

It remains to Enquire how they have improv'd this Possession, to the infinite Advantage of *France*, in an open Trade from the *Spanish West-Indies* to *France* directly, a Thing that never was Attempted before, which they did not pretend to at first, and which they now tell us the *Spaniards* themselves cannot hinder them of, nor all the Power of *Europe* remove them from the Possession they have gotten there.

☞ *It is not an improper note here*, that as the *French* may find themselves mistaken, in the Impossibility of their being Supplanted or Remov'd from *America*; so if the *English* get a like Footing there, it may not be Improbable they may make the like Advantage——Wherefore it seems proper to Examine upon what Foundation it is, that the *French* now carry on their Trade there, and whether it be probable

bable that we can come to Trade there upon the like Foundation; which, *if we cannot do*, it will be hard to ſay, whether we ſhall be able to Trade with the like Advantages, or no; and this is a Point which ought to be Nicely and Impartially Examin'd.

It is true, that the *Spaniards* are very Jealous and uneaſie at the growth and Increaſe of the *French* Trade in *America*; and that the Chamber of Commerce *at Sevil* began to make great Application to King *Philip*, to put a ſtop to it——This Motion was back'd with ſuch Strength of Argument, and it was ſo clearly Repreſented to King *Philip*, That ſuch Licenſe of Trade would effectually Ruin the Trade and Impoveriſh *Old Spain*, which would now no longer be the Mart or Staple of *European* Goods for the *American* Trade; That King *Philip* reſolv'd to Repreſent to his Grandfather, the Abſolute Neceſſity there would be to put a ſtop to it, and that he could not withſtand the Importunities of his Nobility and Merchants in ſuch a Caſe unleſs he ſhould run the hazard of their Abandoning him; in which the Caſe was ſo Popular, that it was to be fear'd the People would eaſily be brought to Concern themſelves, and it might occaſion an Univerſal Revolt.

The King of *France*, who on the one Hand reſolving not to quit the Trade to *New-Spain*, which he found ſo infinitely Advantageous to his Subjects, and which enabled him ſo well to carry on the War, by the vaſt Supply of ready Specie which it brought in every Year to his Kingdom—— And yet convinc'd of the Reaſonableneſs of his Grandſon's Repreſentation, caus'd it to be given out in *Spain*, That he would conſent to reſtore to the *Spaniards* their own, That his Subjects ſhould be recall'd, That the Trade ſhould return into its proper Channel, and that a Limited Time ſhould be ſet, when the Subjects of *France* ſhould ſend no more Ships to the *South Seas*, and another Time ſet for them to withdraw their Effects.

However, contrary to the pretended Deſign, and far from any real Intention to quit the Trade, 12 Ships more than were uſually ſent, were fitted out at *Rochell* and other Ports that Year for the *South-Seas*, in which, not only greater Quantities of Goods were Shipped than uſual, but abundance of Cannon, Mortars, Bombs, Bullets, Arms, Ammunition, *&c.* As if they were preparing for a Campaign in *America*, and more People, eſpecially Officers, with about 300 Paſſengers, ſome as Merchants, ſome as Planters, ſome as Soldiers, were ſent on-Board theſe Ships, all which arriv'd ſafely in the *South-Seas*, and were diſpers'd in the ſeveral Ports of the Kingdoms of *Chili* and *Peru*, as they found convenient.

This Proviſion it is not improper to ſuggeſt was made, in order to keep Poſſeſſion by Force, in caſe the *Spaniards* had inſiſted upon the removing the *French* from that Coaſt —— Which if it came to Extremity, they were to refuſe, the *French* King was to diſown them, to pretend to declare them Rebels, and to make an Appearance of preparing Ships to Supplant them by Force —— Which Ships however, when ſent, were to act according to Secret Inſtructions.

But Time and Circumſtances alter'd all this; the *Spaniſh* Army being Defeated near *Balaguer*, by King *Charles*'s Forces, and after that entirely Overthrown at the Battle of *Saragoſſa*, the King *(Philip)* and all his Court, forc'd a ſecond Time to forſake *Madrid*, and the whole Kingdom being in danger of being loſt; the Caſe was plain, they behoved to have recourſe to the King of *France* for Aſſiſtance; and whereas the *French* were, as it were, quite expell'd *Spain* before, now they were oblig'd to enter again on every Side, and the *Spaniards* being thus a ſecond Time put, *as it were*, into this Poſſeſſion of *France*, their Mouths are ſtop'd, and there ſeems no Room to puſh on the Complaint, till they are a little more at their own Command; when there is no doubt but they will renew their Complaint, unleſs they are entirely Subjugated to the *French* for I muſt be allow'd to take it for granted, that let what Party will prevail in *Spain*, nay, tho' King *Philip* were to remain King of *Spain*, the *Spaniards* of *Old Spain* can never be brought

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by any Thing but meer Deprivation of Senſe, to acquieſce in the *French* carrying on an open Trade in the *South Seas*; and the Reaſon is, becauſe it entirely Defeats *Spain* itſelf, of all the Advantages of their own Commerce, and Excludes them from that Trade, by which they be ſaid really to Subſiſt.

If this ſeems to look as if I ſhould ſay, *neither will they acquieſce in our enjoying the ſame Trade*, I anſwer. There is a manifeſt difference between our Deſign, at leaſt as far as I underſtand it, and the manner with which the *French* carry on the preſent Trade; and if this difference were not to be depended upon, I ſhould openly declare two Things.

1. That our Projected Trade to the *South Seas* would be Impracticable in itſelf, deſtructive to the Intereſt of King *Charles*, and impoſſible to be continu'd beyond a PEACE.
2. That the News of a Trade to the *South Seas* to be carried on by the *Engliſh*, *as the French do now*, and this to continue after the War ſhould be over, would be improv'd by the *French* in *Old Spain*, ſo as to Animate the *Spaniards* againſt the Intereſt of King *Charles*, as a Perſon that had conceded the choiceſt Jewell in the *Spaniſh* Crown to the *Engliſh*, the Ancient Enemies of the *American* Trade.

I ſhall explain this difference as I go; mean Time it is neceſſary to premiſe ſome Things in this Diſcourſe relating to the *French*, and the Circumſtances of their Trade to *America* or the *South Seas*, chooſe which ye pleaſe to call it.

It is certain, the *French* have laid a Foundation, which will in Time, effectually ſupplant the World in Trade, if not ſpeedily prevented, and not only ſo, but ſo fill them with Wealth, as to make them Superiour to all the World in Power; for the Wealth and the Strength will for ever go together.

It remains then a ſtated Maxim in this Caſe, *That the French muſt be remov'd* from their Poſſeſſion in *America*; That the *Spaniards* will not remove them till the War is over, and perhaps my not be able afterwards, is a Thing too plain to need any Enquiry or Diſpute.

That the Strength and Foundation which the *French* have laid for a Trade in the *South Seas*, is very great, no Man will Queſtion, when it ſhall be made appear, as it is plain it may be, that they have five conſiderable Ports and Fortifications on the Coaſt, from *Lima* Southward; that they are Planted, as I may call it, over the whole Kingdom of *Chili*, and that have at this Time, above Fifty Sail of Ships Trading in thoſe Seas, all of them Ships of Force, and Loaden out with very Rich Cargoes.

Thoſe Ships come Home ſo Rich, it will hardly obtain Belief to expreſs it, 60, 70, 100000, to 200000 *l. Sterl.* in Silver, beſides Goods, is their ordinary Cargo, and ſometimes prodigioully more ——— By this Advantage, the *French* have ſufficiently made themſelves amends of their Loſſes by the War (I mean as to Trade) and by this, their King, whenever he pleaſes, poſſeſſes himſelf of ſuch vaſt Summs of Money for his Publick Occaſions, as no Prince in the World but he, can pretend to raiſe upon Trade.

If the *French* are permitted to go on thus, they will carry on the War to the End of the World; if the *Spaniards* ſuffer this, they will, in Time, be a Nation not worth Conquering, not worth Fighting for, not worth the Diſpute between the two Kings; for the Kingdom of *Spain*, as it is Diſmember'd of *America*, after it has been ſo Exhauſted of its People, to Plant thoſe vaſt Countries, is hardly able to ſubſiſt itſelf, leſs to defend itſelf, and leaſt of all to maintain its Ancient Glory and Figure in the World.

It is therefore certain, and may be laid down as a Maxim, *Spain* muſt be freed from the *French*, and the Trade recover'd, or elſe it is entirely loſt both to one Side and the other ——— Nor till the *French* are removed, can our new Attempt have any great Proſpect any Way, which I do not ſay

ſay to diſcourage any Body, for the *French* muſt be remov'd; and the Neceſſity ſhould be far from making us Deſpair, it ought rather to aſſure the World of the certainty of it.

When the *French* are Supplanted our Foundation is laid, not of the Trade only, but of the Recovery of the *Weſt Indies*, which is the preſent ſupport of our Enemies, and which, had it been Attempted ſeven Years ago, I make no queſtion but the War had been long ago at an End—And I cannot but expreſs my Fears, that till theſe are recover'd, the War will never be brought to an End; I ſhall give my Reaſons for this in a little Time.

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